

108 Central/Park Hotel Annex
108 Central Avenue
Great Falls
Cascade County
Montana

HABS No. MT-36

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PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20243

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. MT-36

108 CENTRAL/PARK HOTEL ANNEX

Location: 108 Central Avenue; Lot 3 Block 367
of Great Falls original townsite;
Great Falls, Montana.

Present Owner: Montana Institute for Family Living.

Present Occupant: None.

Present Use: Scheduled for demolition.

Significance: Paris Gibson founded the city of Great Falls, played a notable role in the development of the state of Montana, and was a United States Senator for the state of Montana. It was he that caused this commercial structure to be erected on the main street of Great Falls in 1890. The structure housed offices for various enterprises of Senator Gibson during its history, as well as providing space for other services in the community,

The structure was conceived as a handsome and permanent addition to the avenue by architect John Clinton. Architect Clinton was acting mayor for the community at the same time that he was designing this building, and one of his activities during this service was the adoption of comprehensive fire ordinances for Great Falls buildings.

Great Falls was undergoing a building "boom" in 1890 and this structure was part of that activity. John Clinton did his job well; the building design is well executed; perhaps one of the reasons that it has remained standing longer than its contemporaries.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: ca. 1890.
2. Architect: John Clinton.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The following is a chain of title to the land on which the structure stands. Reference is Cascade County Assessors Office and Clerk and Records Office.

- 1893 Warranty Deed, April 26, 1893, recorded 12 D 343.
Paris Gibson and Valeria G. Gibson to the Park Hotel Co.
- 1896 Warranty Deed, May 14, 1896, recorded 23 D 206.
Paris Gibson and Valeria G. Gibson to the Park Hotel Co.
- 1898 Deed, Dec. 21, 1898, recorded 25 D 231.
Park Hotel Co. to Robert E. Todd.
- 1909 Deed, July 14, 1909, Aug. 12, 1909, recorded 57 D 231.
Robert E. Todd and Catherine Todd to Florence R. Van De Putte.
- 1910/ Deed, Jan. 27, 1910, Sept. 4, 1924, recorded 117 D 231.
1924 Florence R. Van De Putte and May Van De Putte to the
New Park Co. Corp.
- 1916 Deed, June 5, 1906, recorded 99-567. Henry Sieben and
Jessie W. Sieben to Sieben Livestock Co, a Corp.
- 1924 Deed, Sept. 1, 1924, Sept. 30, 1924, recorded 119 D 85.
Henry Sieben and Jessie M. Sieben, Sieben Livestock Co.
to the New Park Co, a Corp.
- 1934 Sheriff's Deed, Nov. 26, 1934, Dec. 5, 1954, recorded 123 D 541.
Sheriff (The New Park Co.) to the Chemical Bank and Trust Co.
- 1936 Deed, July 20, 1936, July 22, 1936, recorded 154 D 99.
Chemical Bank and Trust Co, to Jennie I. Perra.
- 1946 Deed, Sept. 26, 1946, Feb. 13, 1947, recorded 192-416.
1947 Michael Guon, Grayer Guon, Jael Little, Edna Little to
the Park Hotel, Inc.
- 1954 Deed July 14, 1954, Aug. 3, 1954, recorded 234 D 123.
Jennie I. Perra to the Park Hotel, Inc.
- 1970 Warranty Deed June 15, 1970, recorded 64-9966.
Park Hotel Inc. to the Montana Institute of Family Living.

4. Builder, suppliers: Jones and Roberts contractor's.
5. Original plans and construction: No original drawings or plans
have been located. See 1977 measured drawings of elevation and
plan.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

Historical Information: Paris Gibson first heard of the Great Falls of
the Missouri in 1879 and upon visiting them in 1882 he determined to be-
gin a city at the present location of Great Falls. Gibson formed an
alliance with James J. Hill (Great Northern Railway and they began the
development of the area. In the eight short years that elapsed from the

first visit to the Great Falls until this building was built, the site changed from open prairie to a bustling community. During all of the formative years Paris Gibson was a leader of the community and represented Great Falls and Montana in many ways.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old Views:

Streetscape showing Park Hotel Annex on right, Great Falls, Cascade Co. Montana, ca. 1940. From the Great Falls City Engineer's Office.

2. Supplementary Materials and References:

1. Cascade County Assessors Office and Clerk and Records Office.
2. Great Falls Yesterday, M978.6, Great Falls Public Library.
3. Great Falls Tribune Library, Great Falls, Montana (dates as listed).
4. 1896-1897 Cascade County Gazetteer, M978.6, Great Falls Public Library.
5. Gazetteer of the City of Great Falls and the Towns of Neihart and Barker, Montana 1892, M978.6, Great Falls Public Library.
6. Gazetteer of the City of Great Falls and the Towns of Neihart and Barker, Montana 1893, M978.6, Great Falls Public Library.
7. 1899 City Directory, M978.6, Great Falls Public Library.
8. 1900 City Directory, M978.6, Great Falls Public Library.
9. 1905 City Directory, M978.6, Great Falls Public Library.
10. Photographic Archives, Great Falls Public Library.
11. City Engineers Office, City of Great Falls.
12. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps.

Prepared by Patricia Rowse
Historian
Historic American
Buildings Survey
September 1980

From information compiled by Kenneth R. Sievert
Architect
Great Falls, Cascade Co.
Montana

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The most notable architectural treatment for the structure is the fenestration of the north elevation. The treatment of the cornice and windows is derivative of Late Italian Renaissance architecture and was carefully executed in bold relief (alto rilieue) by Architect John Clinton. The window pediments have been "labeled" to accentuate the openings. Although this structure was built during the period when buildings were done in the "commercially exuberant" treatment, it is too elegant to totally fit that description especially when old photo's of the cast iron front are studied. The facade has been compromised by the addition of a fire escape. The remaining three sides of the structure are far less elegant. The interior of the hotel has been remodeled on the first and second levels. The most notable interior features that remain are a handsome metal ceiling on the first level and some hotel rooms in original condition on the third floor. The upper rooms were obviously those of a "first-class" hotel - especially the suites that fronted on Central Avenue. In conclusion, there are few facades in this area as elegant or with as much integrity in the execution of the design.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The three story, eight bay wide structure measures 150 feet in depth by 50 feet along the frontage.
2. Foundation: Sandstone.
3. Wall construction: Brick bearing walls (a different grade of brick was used on the north than the west, east, or south). Dark red on north, orange-light brown other walls.
4. Structural system, framing: First floor has wooden structural elements on steel girders with 2' crawl space below. Upper floors and roof also have wooden structural elements with steel girders below bearing wall. Lower floor columns are cast iron (but are presently covered).
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Presently are missing throughout the building.
 - b. Windows: Wood, double hung. Segmental brick arches occur on the exterior above all windows except the windows with decorative pediments on the north, front.
6. Roof: Built-up roof with brick parapets.
7. Cornice: Galvanized iron with paint finish.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: See measured drawings.
2. Flooring: Wood.
3. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster and lath. A wood beadboard wainscot occurs in all hallways with decorative wallpaper above the wainscot (see photos).
4. Decorative reatures: Hardware is missing, period molding (see photos).
5. Heating: Steam radiators.

D. Site:

The location of the building is significant when put into perspective. The first block on Central Avenue was the business and financial hub of the day and the plans for the commercial expansion of the city were started here. Also, the Park Hotel occupied the corner of Park Drive and Central Avenue, immediately adjacent to the railroad depot to the west and the business district immediately east. Because of its location this structure was conceived as a hotel annex on upper floors and a business occupancy on the lower floor fronting Central Avenue.

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PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Department of Housing and Urban Development in compliance with Executive Order 11593 and a Memorandum of Agreement with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation as a mitigative effort in the demolition of the Park Hotel Annex, 108 Central Avenue. John A. Burns, AIA, was HABS project coordinator. Historic data was compiled by Kenneth R. Sievert and the architectural measured drawings were also prepared by Kenneth R. Sievert. Photographs were taken by John Dehaas and K.R. Sievert in 1977. The data was edited and prepared for transmittal to the Library of Congress by Patricia L. Rowse, a historian in the HABS office, September 1980.

ADDITION TO
108 CENTRAL (~~Commercial Building~~)
(~~Commercial Building~~)
(Park Hotel Annex)
108 Central Avenue
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REDUCED COPIES OF DRAWINGS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
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